

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056153

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CPAS LY FI

SUBJECT: LIBYA REFUSES VISA TO FINNISH AMBASSADOR PRESENTING
CREDENTIALS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BUDAPST PARIS SOFIA TRIPOLI
MARCH 26, FROM HELSINKI REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 0781

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CPAS LY FI

SUBJECT: LIBYA REFUSES VISA TO FINNISH AMBASSADOR
PRESENTING CREDENTIALS

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

REF: (A) SOFIA 3 13; (B) STATE 10425; (C) STATE 27051

BEGIN SUMMARY. FINNISH AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO, ALSO NEWLY
APPOINTED TO TRIPOLI, WAS RECENTLY REFUSED VISA TO LIBYA
TO PRESENT CREDENTIALS. FINNS HAVE NOT YET BUT MAY
CLOSE MISSION IN TRIPOLI, WHICH IS ONE- MAN POST HEADED
BY COMMERICAL ATTACHE. FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD
APPRECIATE INFORMATION ON HOW LIBYAN REGULATIONS HAVE
AFFECTED US AND OTHERS AND WHAT COUNTERMEASURES ARE BEING
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TAKEN. FINNS ARE ANXIOUS TO COOPERATE IN ANY JOINT EFFORT TO END THE LIBYAN REQUIREMENT. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT APPROPRIATE INFORMATION BE PROVIDED THE FINNS AND THAT THEY BE INCLUDED IN ANY CONTEMPLATED COORDINATION OF COUNTERMEASURES. END SUMMARY.

1. FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS CONFIRMED REPORT IN REFTEL (A) THAT FINNISH AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT, PEKKA MALINEN, WHO HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED AGREEMENT AS AMBASSADOR ALSO TO LIBYA, WAS REFUSED A LIBYAN VISA SEVERAL DAYS AGO WHEN HE INTENDED TO TRAVEL TO TRIPOLI TO PRESENT CREDENTIALS. LIBYAN EMBASSY IN CAIRO WOULD NOT ISSUE THE VISA BECAUSE MALINEN' S PASSPORT DID NOT CONTAIN PERSONAL DATA IN ARABIC. IN JANUARY A FINNISH BUSINESSMAN HAD SIMILARLY BEEN REFUSED A VISA IN CAIRO. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, THE LIBYAN MISSION IN THAT CITY HAS INSISTED THAT ARABIC TEXTS BE INSCRIBED IN INK IN THE PASSPORTS.

2. MALINEN HAS REPORTED THAT SEVERAL OTHER AMBASSADORS IN CAIRO HAVE HAD IDENTICAL PROBLEM AS HE IN PRESENTING CREDENTIALS. HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO, WHO IS ALREADY ACCREDITED IN TRIPOLI AND HAS A VALID LIBYAN VISA, ALSO TOLD MALINEN THAT HUNGARIAN DIPLOMATIC COURIERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET VISAS IN PAST FEW MONTHS, REQUIRING THE AMBASSADOR TO MAKE THE COURIER RUNS FROM ROME TO TRIPOLI.

3. SINCE EARLY JANUARY, WHEN LIBYAN GOVERNMENT NOTIFIED THE FINNS OF NEW PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS BEEN CONCERNED AND IRKED BY THE NEW PROCEDURES. AFTER CONSULTING WITH NORDIC NEIGHBORS AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES, FINNS DECIDED THAT THEY WILL UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENT TO ISSUE PASSPORTS WITH ARABIC TEXTS. NOR WILL THEY PROVIDE SEPARATE ARABIC TRANSLATIONS SINCE THEY DO NOT HAVE QUALIFIED ARABIC TRANSLATORS IN FINLAND. THE FINNS HAVE ASKED THE LIBYAN MISSIONS AT VISA ISSUING POINTS TO MAKE THE TRANSLATIONS, BUT THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT HAS APPARENTLY REFUSED. AS A RESULT THE FINNS HAVE DECIDED THAT THEY WILL REQUIRE LIBYANS TO FURNISH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THEIR ARABIC LANGUAGE PASSPORTS.

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4. FINNS ARE PRESENTLY TRYING TO WORK OUT MEANS FOR

MALINEN TO PRESENT CREDENTIALS IN TRIPOLI AND TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THEIR ONE- MAN MISSION THERE, WHICH IS HEADED BY A COMMERICAL ATTACHE. WHILE SOME THOUGHT IS BEING GIVEN TO CLOSING THE TRIPOLI OFFICE AND WITHDRAWING THE OFFICER, MALINEN HAS REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED THAT THE POST NOT RPT NOT BE CLOSED SINCE THE ATTACHE HAS A VALID VISA ISSUED PRIOR TO THE NEW REGULATIONS, FROM WHICH HE IS THEREFORE EXEMPT, AND HE IS THUS THE ONLY FINNISH OFFICIAL NOW ABLE TO TRAVEL TO AND FROM LIBYA. FINNS HAVE NOT, HOWEVER, REACHED A FINAL DECISION, AND OUTCOME WILL DEPEND IN LARGE MEASURE ON WHETHER MALINEN IS ABLE EVENTUALLY TO PRESENT CREDENTIALS.

5. FINNS ARE ANGERED BY THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THEM, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY UNDERSTAND THAT SOME OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE NOT BEEN REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW REGULATIONS. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS LED TO UNDERSTAND BY ITS FRENCH COUNTERPART, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT FRENCH PASSPORTS REGULARLY ARE BEING ACCEPTED BY THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT WITHOUT ARABIC TEXTS OF ANY KIND.

6. THE FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL DEALING WITH THIS WHOLE PROBLEM EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT CONCERTED ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS AFFECTED COULD RESOLVE THE DILEMMA. HE ALSO WONDERED WHAT DIFFICULTIES THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES HAD ENCOUNTERED AND WHAT COUNTERMEASURES WERE BEING UNDERTAKEN. HE SAID FINNS WOULD HAPPILY COOPERATE IN ANY COMMON EFFORT TO END THE LIBYANS' " ABSURD" PASSPORT REQUIREMENT.

7. BECAUSE OF CAVEAT IN PARA THREE OF STATE 10425 THE EMBASSY DID NOT DESCRIBE SITUATION AS IT AFFECTS THE US. WE ALSO NOTE THAT FINNISH REPRESENTATIVE WAS ABSENT FROM FEBRUARY 12 MEETING OF DIPLOMATIC MISSION REPRESENTATIVES CONVENED BY US CHARGE IN TRIPOLI (STATE 27051), WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE FINNS ARE NOT FULLY INFORMED.

8. ACTION REQUESTED. IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES THE FINNS ARE FACING WITH LIBYA, WE SUGGEST THAT THEY BE GIVEN ALL APPROPRIATE INFORMATION AND THAT FINNS BE INCLUDED IN ANY CONTEMPLATED COORDINATION OF FUTURE STEPS TO BRING
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ABOUT A CHANGE IN THE LIBYAN REGULATIONS. WHITE UNQUOTE
ROGERS

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